

“Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth” (Ps 86:11ab). The author of Psalm 86 is thankful to God with all his heart. He has personally experienced the divine love of God who rescued him from the depths of darkness. Still, he is troubled by those who seek to do him evil. They do not fear the Lord and they attack the God-fearing author of the psalm. Thus, he cries out to the Lord in prayer. He praises God for being compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in love. He seeks the Lord’s favor so that those who do him harm will recognize they should back off. <sup>i</sup>“Give me a sign of your favor: make my enemies see, to their confusion, that you, LORD, help and comfort me” (vs 17).

“Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth” (Ps 86:11ab). Applying the verse from psalm 86 to our Gospel, we see Jesus reaching out to the marginalized to dine with them. Jesus chose to eat with tax collectors and sinners not because they are spiritually healthy but because they are in need of repentance. Two tax collectors he singles out for special dinners are Levi and Zacchaeus. When Jesus does this, people like the Pharisees grumble and find fault with him. To be fair, Jesus also visits the homes of a number of Pharisees for they to are in need of repentance. Luke’s Gospel is full of situations where Jesus sits down to talk with people over a meal to help them grow in self-awareness and holiness. Jesus invites us to dine with him in church each Sunday. Are we not also in need of repentance? Through the Gospel he speaks to us. And then he offers us his Body in Holy Communion so that we may change and grow for the better.

“Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth” (Ps 86:11ab). Applying the verse from psalm 86 to our first reading, we see the Prophet Isaiah instructing as well. Amidst the political divisiveness of our times, it is helpful for all of us to meditate on how we should communicate with others. We are called to speak truthfully abstaining from any false accusations or malicious speech.

Isaiah also challenges us to remove oppression from our midst. Pope Paul VI explained this well in 1972 with his message for the first World Day of Prayer for Peace. “If you want Peace, work for Justice!” He explained, when peace is imposed by force, we see the human spirit being crushed by torture. Peace imposed by force is bound to lead to an eruption of violence. We see in massive protests in Myanmar, Russia, Belarus, not to mention our nations own Capitol. Peace must be rooted in a true respect for others. When we work for social justice, we recognize the dignity of every human being. No one is put down in order to lift another up. Just the opposite, the most vulnerable are lifted up and put on an equal footing with others. Instead of winners and losers, everyone benefits from a fairer and more just society.

The Prophet Isaiah offers help in explaining how we may do this in practical ways. Feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, lift people out of darkness to see the light of day. As we care for the less fortunate, the Lord is watching and ready to help and strengthen us.

Those who feed the hungry also need to be nourished and here Isaiah reminds us to make the sabbath holy. “If you hold back your foot on the sabbath from following your own pursuits on my holy day ... Then you shall delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth” (Is 58:13a, 14a). “Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth” (Ps 86:11ab).

---

<sup>i</sup> Kriegshauser, Laurence. Praying the Psalms in Christ